

H 6122 – Annual Budget – Article 11 – Adult Use of Marijuana

I am in favor of the above Bill and would like to put forth some ideas so that medical marijuana patients are not affected negatively.

1. No tax for patients- Many patients have reduced incomes and affordability is a key issue. Recreational taxes are sure to range up to 20%, which will more than cover the loss of tax revenue earned via medical taxation. This would be similar to MA taxation.

2. Cannabis commission- The cannabis industry is a unique and exploding industry that must be subject to scrutiny in order to protect the industry from unwanted manipulation. There must be a regulatory scheme that promotes instate business, education, social equity, accessibility and affordability.

3. Increased weight for patients- Patient's conditions often require increased cannabis intake to offset their symptoms. The current low weight limit can impair their ability to have enough supply for their ailments.

4. Expungement for prior cannabis infractions- There has been a direct and disproportionate impact on residents of RI who have been convicted of crimes over non-violent marijuana charges. The recent changes in marijuana policy should retroactively absolve persons of their marijuana infractions from the past. I acknowledge that automatic expungement may not be feasible, but an expedited application and review process would be a great compromise.

5. Re-instatement for patients prejudiced by legislation that targeted cannabis use- Much like above, patients have been barred from entering or re-entering the medical marijuana program because of legislation that is or will soon be wiped away by the legalization and normalization of marijuana.

6. Moratorium on legalization- If legalization passes this coming session, I strongly advise that the State puts a Moratorium on any recreational sales until the State has adequate time to build a strong foundation for the program. Without the moratorium, there will be supply and demand issues, and an opportunity for the existing centers to enrich themselves in an opportunistic and monopolized market.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my position on issues that will impact a large portion of the Rhode Island population. I take this very seriously, and look forward to any input, concerns or questions you may have.

Sincerely,

William Cotton
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